DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 251 362 SO 016 051

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TITLE Growing Together: An Opportunity for Young Adolescents and Their Parents. A Report on Catholic Youth in Grades 5 through 8, and Their Parents.
INSTITUTION National Catholic Educational Association, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE 84
NOTE 74p.; This booklet is published as part of a packet of educational materials related to an NCEA project on "Young Adolescents and Their Parents." The project is partially supported by a grant from the Knights of Columbus Father Michael J. McGivney Memorial Fund for New Initiatives in Catholic Education.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC04 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS Adolescents; Catholics; *Catholic Schools; Developmental Stages; Educational Needs; Educational Research; Human Resources; Individual Development; Intermediate Grades; Junior High Schools; *Parent Attitudes; Religion; Social Attitudes; Social Behavior; Social Characteristics; *Student Attitudes; Student Behavior; *Student Characteristics; Values

ABSTRACT

The results of a survey which studied the attitudes and characteristics of Catholic youth and their parents and then compared these with the attitudes and characteristics of non-Catholic youth are presented. A total of 1,130 students in grades 5-8 from 13 Catholic schools, 613 mothers, and 352 fathers completed survey questionnaires. The data collected were compared with data from similar surveys of students conducted by 12 non-Catholic organizations (largely a public school sample). Because data are to be used by the National Catholic Education Association to develop new programs, specific survey results and discussion starters and suggestions for action are presented parallel to one another. Results indicate that in comparision with other youth, Catholic students do more homework, experience more anxiety about school, attend church more often, are more concerned with social problems, and are more likely to consider abortion as morally wrong. Catholic youth report less prosocial behavior and more agressive and norm-breaking behavior, are more interested in sexuality, and are more likely than other youth to drink and smoke. Catholic parents expressed a great deal of worry and concern over their children. (RM)

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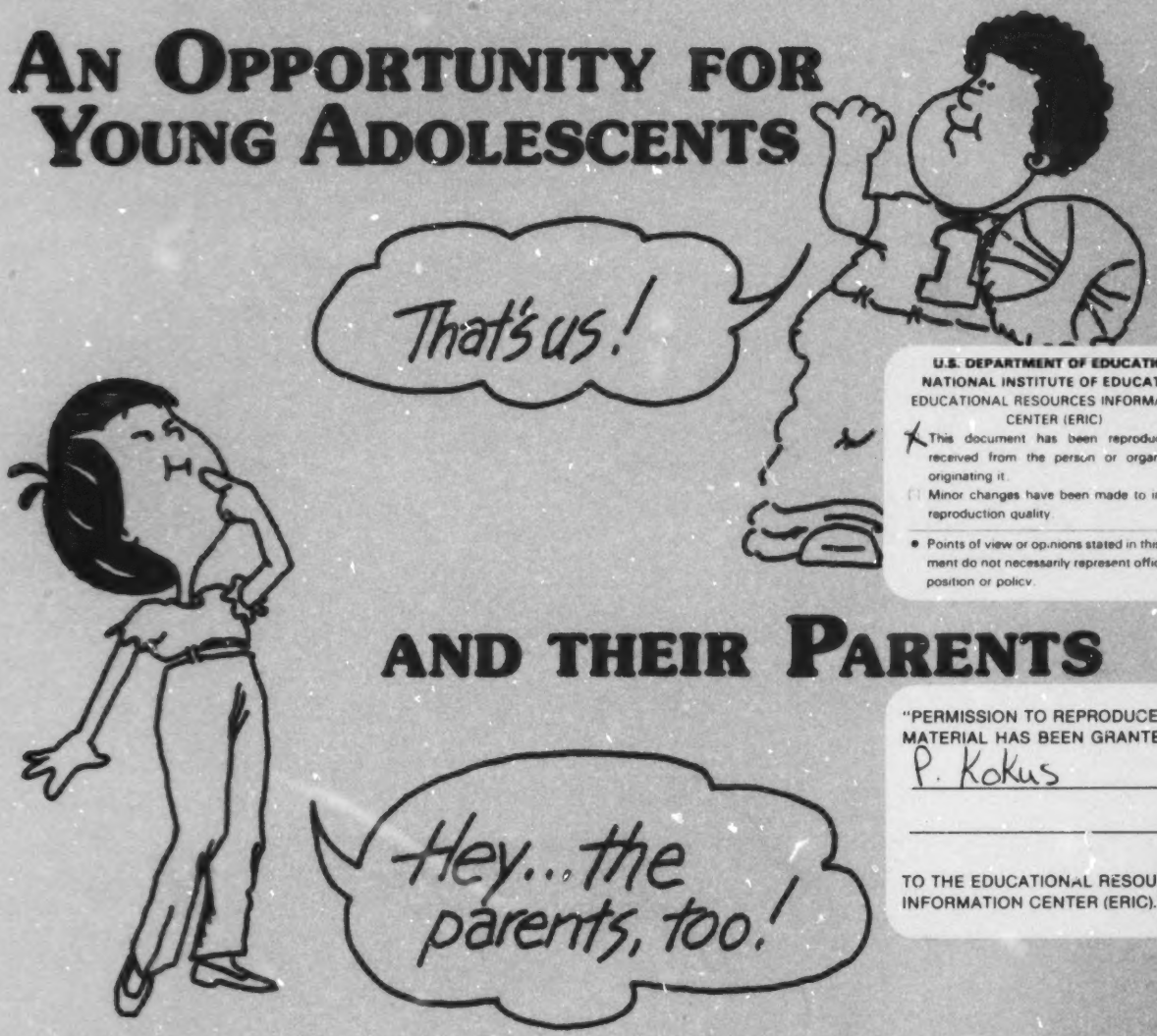
GROWING TOGETHER:

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR YOUNG ADOLESCENTS AND THEIR PARENTS



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Growing Together: (A Report on Catholic Youth in Grades 5 Through 8 and Their Parents

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GROWING TOGETHER

A Report on Catholic Youth in
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Bruno V. Manno
Director, Research and
In-Service
NCEA
June, 1984

FOREWORD

Factual data have a way of speaking for themselves. In a society which is scientifically-oriented and empirically tuned, statistics are searched out and often utilized to maximum advantage. Facts are useful in many ways. They can stimulate original thinking, buttress new and old arguments, substantiate opinions, inspire decisions, help prevent mistakes, broaden understandings, clarify confusion, challenge the status quo, facilitate discussion, and destroy stereotypes.

In reality, a statistic or datum does not exist without a context. Thus, the need for interpretation. Interpretation requires reflection and discussion, and thus a whole lot of involvement. This book is designed for involvement.

Intended for parents, principals, teachers, and parish staff, this material is for those who want to learn more about the young adolescents attending Catholic schools, and about the parents of those young people. What about teachers and others who work with the religious education of Catholic youth attending other private or public schools--will this book be of interest to them? Yes, by all means. A good case can be made for the use of these data to describe Catholic families with ties to their Church, whether or not these youth are in a Catholic school. Surely, the percentages will vary some, but they would vary from parish to parish anyway.

My hope is that Catholic educators and parents of all kinds will find this study useful as a tool in serving youth and parents more effectively. The book is deliberately short and sketchy. Interpretations are few, since by design, that responsibility is being left for you, the reader. It is recommended that you read this book with another person or several. Facts are given on the even-numbered pages, and discussion-starters and suggestions for action are given on the odd. The rest is up to you. Put the flesh on the bare bones, the meaning on the matter.

So, these are some facts! But what do they mean? The value is in the search for meaning. Best wishes.

John Forliti
April 10, 1984

INTRODUCTION

In the Fall of 1982, thirteen Catholic elementary schools participated in a survey of 5th-8th grade youth and their parents.* A total of 1130 youth, 613 mothers and 352 fathers completed the survey questionnaire. This survey of Catholic schools affiliated with the National Catholic Educational Association (NCEA) is part of a larger project involving thirteen national youth-serving organizations. The other twelve organizations, each of which surveyed a national sample of its 5th-9th grade youth and parents, were:

African Methodist Episcopal Church
American Lutheran Church
Baptist General Conference
Churches of God, General Conference
Evangelical Covenant Church
4-H Extension
Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod
National Association of Homes for Children
Presbyterian Church in the United States
Southern Baptist Convention
United Church of Christ
United Methodist Church

Overall, a total of 8165 youth and 10,457 parents were included in this national study. Search Institute of Minneapolis, with funding from Lilly Endowment, directed the project. An Advisory Committee, composed of representatives from each of the thirteen agencies, helped plan, guide, and implement the project. This Advisory Committee, which included Dr. Bruno Manno, Director of Research and In-Service for NCEA, met twice a year, beginning in 1981.

The major goal of the Young Adolescents and Their Parents project was to gain a new understanding of 5th-9th grade youth and their parents in order to assist the thirteen participating organizations, both individually and collectively, to design and develop new programs and resources.

This report is a summary of the data collected from the NCEA sample. For purposes of comparison with the other twelve groups included in the study, composite data are frequently cited. Description of the composite sample and the NCEA sample follow.

The Composite Sample

The composite sample to which NCEA is compared can be characterized this way. Ten of the 12 other organizations are national, Protestant church bodies. These ten Protestant groups well represent the geographical and

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*All organizations except NCEA also surveyed 9th grade youth and their parents. In this report, NCEA youth are compared only to other 5th-8th grade youth, and NCEA parents are compared only to other parents of 5th-8th grade youth.

theological diversity that typifies American Protestantism. The other two groups in the project, 4-H Extension and the National Association of Homes for Children (NAHC), reinforce the religious dimension of this study. A high percentage of 4-H youth are active, Protestant church members, and the majority of NAHC-affiliated institutions have Protestant ties. Hence, the composite sample tends to represent American young adolescents and parents who are affiliated with a local, Protestant congregation.

Furthermore, the sample likely represents the more active among this population of church-affiliated families. In many congregations, some youth and parents chosen to participate declined. While no empirical data exist comparing non-respondents to respondents, it seems reasonable to hypothesize that less active members would be more likely than active members to decline participation.

NCEA Sample

Twenty-two Catholic elementary schools were selected for participation in this study. All schools had grades kindergarten through eight. In selecting the 22 schools, the following procedure was used: All Catholic elementary schools affiliated with NCEA were sorted into eighteen different categories The categories represented different combinations of geography (New England, Mideast, Great Lakes, Plains, Southwest, West and Far West) and location (rural, suburban, urban). Schools were selected randomly in each category, in proportion to the number of schools in the category. Because only 22 schools were selected, some of the smaller categories did not have a school selected. This stratified random sample was distributed as shown below. Numbers indicate the number of schools selected. The numbers in the parentheses show the number of schools who actually participated in the study.

	Urban	Suburban	Rural
New England	1 (0)	0	0
Mideast	3 (0)	2 (2)	1 (1)
Great Lakes	2 (2)	1 (1)	2 (1)
Plains	1 (0)	1 (1)	1 (0)
Southeast	1 (1)	1 (1)	1 (0)
West and Far West	2 (2)	1 (1)	1 (0)
	10 (5)	6 (6)	6 (2)

Overall, 13 of the 22 schools participated in the project. Had all 22 schools cooperated, the resulting NCEA samples of youth and parents would have represented well the actual distribution of elementary school students and their parents. However, an examination of the distribution of cooperating school reveals several biases in the eventual sample. The final NCEA sample is overrepresented by suburban schools and underrepresented by urban and rural schools. This underrepresentation is more pronounced in the case of rural schools. In terms of geography, the sample is particularly overrepresented by Great Lakes schools. Accordingly, the NCEA sample should not be taken as fully representative of all Catholic elementary youth and their parents. As long as these limitations are recognized, and the data interpreted within this context, the NCEA findings have valuable descriptive and programming utility.

The thirteen participating schools administered the youth survey to all available 5th through 8th grade students during classroom sessions. In most schools, mothers and fathers of these young adolescents were invited to attend survey administration sessions during evening hours. It is not known how well these parents represent all parents of the 1130 youth. It may be that those parents who participated are more active in school activities, or less bound by young children at home or evening employment, than parents who did not participate. Because only about one-third of the fathers participated, the father data should be interpreted with particular caution.

Two additional points need to be noted as cautions in interpreting the data. The NCEA sample has a racial distribution of 84% White, 4% Black, 3% Hispanic, and 1.4% Asian. The NCEA sample is not totally Catholic in denomination. About 12 percent of youth respondents indicated non-Catholic affiliation.

PART I

YOUNG ADOLESCENTS

In this Part, major findings about social context, adolescent development, values and religion, behaviors, and program resources are reported.

CHAPTER 1

SOCIAL CONTEXT

Where do young adolescents live out their lives? Who are the people and what are the institutions significant to them? This chapter reports their feelings and perspectives about school, family, and church. Their relationships in those settings and their peer relationships account for most of their time and energy. Involvement in youth groups and activities, and exposure to mass media more or less account for the rest.

School. Catholic school youth* rate themselves lower in how well they they are doing in school, with 53% seeing themselves as doing above average in school compared with 57% in the composite sample. Compared with the composite group, Catholic youth in all four grades spend more time doing homework, they see their peers as less involved with alcohol and marijuana use at school, they report less personal interest in school (i.e., teachers caring, exciting classes, feelings about school), although they report a more positive climate (especially the 7th and 8th graders). Catholic school youth apparently see less marijuana smoking, goofing off in the classroom, alcohol consumption and stealing at school than youth in the composite sample. They see more young people feeling good about school and trying to do their best.

Context of Peers and Friends. Catholic school youth are more racially and sexually integrated than the composite sample with more Catholic youth reporting friends from other races and of the opposite sex. Catholic youth are the same as the composite sample in peer orientation, with one in seven turning to their friends rather than their parents for advice on decisions. Half rank friends and parents equally, and one in three would turn to parents. Six out of ten say they enjoy being with parents equally as much as with friends. More fifth graders prefer parents over friends than 8th graders (51% vs. 19%) on advice over a decision and (33% vs. 7%) on enjoyment in being with parents.

Catholic school youth have interracial contact as much as the composite sample and they have similar degrees of pressures from friends toward deviance.

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*For purposes of style and variety, this report uses the term "Catholic youth" in reference to the NCEA sample. The reader is referred to the introduction for a description of the youth involved in this study.

Discussion and Action Starters

School

1. What do you see from the data as "good news" and "bad news" about school?
2. How do teachers exhibit a caring attitude and caring behaviors?
3. What can be done to enhance an overall caring atmosphere in schools? Conduct a faculty in-service event to explore the topic of teacher care.
4. How important is the attitude which encourages young people to do their best? What are some ways to have this attitude permeate the entire educational experience?

> In a average week, 4% of Catholic youth spend no time on homework, 35% spend 1 to 2 hours, 32% spend 3 to 5 hours, 22% spend 6 to 10 hours, and 7% spend 11 hours or more.

> 38% of Catholic youth report "kids feeling good about school."
>
> 36% of Catholic youth report "kids trying to do their best" in school.

Peers and Friends

1. How can schools encourage young people to seek parental guidance and support?
2. What are some techniques a school might use to get parents talking with other parents about being "askable" adults, more approachable and active listeners?
3. Do school and home tend to give youth the impression that peer influence is good? bad? neither? both?

> Item:
>
> If you had a very important decision to make, to whom would you turn for advice--your friends or parents?
>
> Fifth graders' response: 61% would turn to parents, 14% to friends, 35% to to both.
>
> Eighth graders' response: 19% would turn to parents, 16% to friends, 65% to both.

Context of Church. Catholic school youth are high on church attendance. Eighty-four percent of 5th graders, 90% of 6th, 88% of 7th and 91% of 8th attend worship services two or three times a month or more, a bit higher than the composite sample. Interest in church is less among older youth. Compared with the three younger grades, whose response averaged 48%, 8th graders reported church as less important to them with only 36% responding "extremely" or "very important."

How do Catholic youth feel about the relevance of their church? About half the 5th graders (45%) and one-third of 8th (31%) say their church helps them answer important questions. Twenty-three percent of 5th, 32% of 6th, 36% of 7th and 28% of 8th responded "very little" or "not at all." The composite sample was more positive than Catholic school youth on this item.

When asked if their priest knew their name, 65% reported affirmatively, compared to 81% in the composite sample.

Many Catholic youth (44.2%) think their church has no youth program, and many (38.4%) say their church has a program but they rarely or never participate. Only 17.4% participate regularly in church programs compared with 57.7% in the composite sample. Apparently parochial school youth do not include the educational ministry of their schools as a "youth program."

Discussion and Action Starters

Church

1. What are the questions important to eighth graders that their Church might better help them find answers for? How do you interpret their feelings about the Church?

2. Why does the Church become more irrelevant for young people as they grow older? Is this inevitable? Why or why not?

3. What can parents and teachers do to help Catholic students see the Catholic school as part of their Church's ministry to youth?

4. Sponsor a home and school event to respond to the issues raised above.

5. Are there "nameless" faces in your school or parish? If so, what can you do to make sure every student feels personally contacted?

Context of Family. Seventy-seven percent of Catholic school youth live with both natural parents, a slightly higher number than the composite sample, and more Catholic youth (11.2%) live with single-parent mothers. The number of youth (17%) who have divorced or separated parents is similar to the composite sample, as is the number of youth who are adopted (2.9%). Five percent have their grandmother living in their home.

How many children are in the families of Catholic school youth? Thirty percent have one sibling, 41% have two or three, 21% have four or more, 7% are the only child. Their families are only slightly larger than families in the composite sample.

How often do the parents of Catholic youth hug their children? Sixty-six percent of mothers and 43% of fathers hug their children every day (composite percentages are 61% mothers and 42% fathers). As they get older, children are hugged less, the most significant drop occurring between the 7th and 8th grades. Catholic school youth report more affectionate mothers than the composite sample.

More than half (53%) of Catholic youths' families never discuss God, the Bible, or other religious topics, at least to the knowledge of the youth respondents. This compares with 40% in the composite sample, answering "never" on this item.

Fewer youth receive punishment when they disobey their parents, 26% answering "never" or "once in a while" compared with 20% of composite sample. Thirty-seven percent think their parents are more strict than the parents of other youth they know (about the same as the composite sample). Slightly more believe their parents trust them (69% vs. 65%).

Sixteen measures were used to assess family dynamics, that is, how life is experienced at home by the adolescent. Compared with the composite sample, Catholic school youth reported a lower degree of parents getting along well together and family closeness. They reported higher levels of permissive control and demonstrative affection by mothers, and higher levels of coercive discipline by both mothers and fathers. They are similar to the composite sample on all other measures: authoritarian control by both parents, democratic control by both parents, permissive control by fathers, demonstrative affection by fathers, degree of nurturance by both parents, and inductive discipline by both parents.*

A look at some specific items will help the reader understand family dynamics. Seventy-one percent of Catholic youth responded "very" or "quite true" that "there is a lot of love in my family." Sixty-six percent reported that family members get along well with each other.

Responding to items about discipline at home, 18 percent think their fathers and 18 percent think their mothers let them get off easy when they do something wrong. Thirteen percent report getting slapped or hit by fathers, 11 percent by mothers, when they do something wrong. Forty-eight percent of fathers and 54 percent of mothers reportedly take time to help their young adolescents see why an action was wrong, and 40 percent of fathers, and 46 percent of mothers talk over rules with their adolescent when the rules are not understood or liked by the adolescent.

*See description of family dynamic scales in this chapter.

Discussion and Action Starters

Family Dynamics

Description of Family Dynamic Scales

Parents' marital harmony measures the rating youth give parents for getting along, how often they see parents argue or get mad at each other, and how often they see them hug or kiss each other.

Family closeness measures both youth's perceptions of how well their family gets along with each other and how much love they feel is present in their family.

Authoritarian control measures how much adolescents experience the discipline style of mothers and/or fathers as one which tries to control by ordering them around, expecting them to believe the parent is always right, and refusing to discuss rules parents make.

Democratic control measures how much adolescents experience the discipline style of mother and/or father as one which tries to control by talking over rules which adolescents question and explaining why specific rules are necessary and important.

Permissive control measures degree to which adolescents experience parents letting them off easy when they do something wrong, giving in when they make a fuss, and letting them to whatever they want.

Coercive discipline measures the amount of slapping, hitting, yelling and shouting parents use. Also included are the punitive factors of grounding (can't go out of the house) and isolation (can't be with friends).

Inductive disipline measures whether or not parents usually take the time necessary to help the adolescent understand why something was wrong or why the adolescent was being punished.

Demonstrative affection measures how often parents tell adolescents they love them or are proud of them, and how often they hug or kiss them.

Nurturance measures the degree parents comfort adolescents (when the adolescents feel upset or scared), are patient and kind toward them, and are helpful when they have problems. Negatively it measures the degree parents make adolescents feel they are nothing but trouble and would prefer not having them around.

Discussion and Action Starter (continued)

Family

1. Sponsor programs for parents which explore family dynamics such as demonstrative affection, various discipline style, and the concept of nurturance. Invite group process experts to develop programs which educate by involvement.

2. Do the same for your school's faculty. Or bring parents and faculty together in one program.

3. Is the drop in parental affection-giving inevitable as children grow bigger and become adolescents? Don't young adolescents still need to be touched and hugged? Why the resistance on their part? Their parents part? Are there ways to show affection which are more appropriate and acceptable to adolescents than what was their childhood experience?

4. List Gospel values which encourage nurturance and discuss ways to promote them.

Youths' involvement in groups. From a list of fourteen youth organizations, Catholic youth reported Scouts (Boy and Girl), 4-H, and the Y's as the most popular, with participation of 13%, 6.6%, and 6% respectively. Three percent are involved in Red Cross activities, and less than 2% in the others.

Three out of four Catholic school youth have an adult at home when they finish their school day (5th grade - 82%, 6th - 81%; 7th - 70%; 8th - 68%). Fifteen percent of grades 5-8 are home alone for an hour at most, six percent for about two hours, and four percent for about three hours before an adult arrives.

Mass Media Exposure. On all measures of mass media exposure, Catholic school youth are either as exposed or more exposed than the composite sample. A little more than half (53%) watch TV at least three hours a day, (composite sample, 51%), 19% (vs. 13% composite) listen to hard rock music three hours or more a day, 33% (vs. 23%) play video games at least three hours daily, and 9% go to movies once a week or more (8% composite).

A lot more Catholic youth like to see "R" or "X" rated movies (38% vs 28%) and more like to see movies in which people get hurt or killed (25% vs. 20%). Overall, at all four grades, 5 through 8, Catholic school youth are significantly more exposed to media.

Are any trends evident between 5th and 8th grades? Older youth watch more TV, not less, than younger; they listen more to hard rock, go to movies less, and are much more interested in "R" or "X" rated movies (44% of 8th graders responded "very much" or "quite a bit" compared with 28% of 5th graders when asked about their interest in seeing "R" or "X" rated movies).

Discussion and Action Starters

Involvement in Organization

1. Gather information on youth organizations available to your students in your area. Sponsor a home and school or parish event which explores how young people might be better served, if necessary, by organized out-of-school activities.

2. Do youth who participate in organizations receive support and encouragement from school for their involvements? If not, how might they?

3. How do you feel about young adolescents' requirements for adult supervision?

Mass Media Exposure

1. Sponsor a faculty workshop which deals with the media's influence on young people. Find ways to help young people become responsible consumers.

2. Select items from the data which appear disturbing to you. Find a forum to discuss them.

3. Find catechetical resources which promote non-violence and integrate these resources into youth programs if necessary.

Socio-Economic Indicators

The total family annual income for Catholic school youth is under $20,000 for 18%, between $20,000 and $39,999 for 54% and $40,000 or more for 28%. Compared with the composite sample, the average income of Catholic families in this study is higher. The fathers of Catholic youth have about the same level of education as the composite sample while mothers have less. Four out of ten fathers (40%) and slightly more mothers (45%) at most completed high school. Forty-three percent of fathers and 34% of mothers completed college or a graduate degree.

Catholic school youth have a bit more spending money than other youth, with 7% claiming to have $16 or more weekly, 15% between $6 and $15, and 54% between $1-$5, 21% less than $1.

The overall status of the socio-economic condition of the families of Catholic school youth is not significantly different from the composite sample.

Discussion and Action Starters

Socio-Economic Indicator

1. Who is teaching young people about the concept of stewardship? Is it enough? Is it practiced? Is it religiously motivated?

2. Organize a faculty in-service on stewardship of time, talent and treasure. Do the same for parents.

3. Gather pamphlets and other resources on stewardship and make them available at school and parish.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESSES

Young adolescents are developing rapidly and in life-shaping ways. The adults in their lives play a very important role in adolescent growth. This chapter reports what youth are seeing relative to their own development.

Autonomy. On the autonomy measures which include importance attributed to making one's own decisions, the degree to which this is actually done, the amount of conflict with parents and hostility toward them, and anti-authority feelings, Catholic school youth are not significantly different from the composite sample. Four in ten 5th graders place a very high priority on making their own decisions. For 8th graders, it is seven in ten.

Maturation and Sexuality. Parents were asked to evaluate the physical development of their adolescents. Sixty-six percent of the mothers of 5th graders responded that their child had not yet arrived at puberty (compared with 56% composite sample), and 1% think their 5th grader is completely through pubertal changes. For 8th graders, 8% feel puberty has not started, and 9% feel it is completed (composite sample is 7% and 13% respectively).

Seventeen percent of Catholic school youth say they think about sex very often, a significantly higher number than the composite sample. Half say they are presently in love with someone of the opposite sex (grade 5, 47%; grade 6, 50%; grade 7, 50%; grade 8, 51%).

Combining several items into a scale to measure degree of interest in the opposite sex, Catholic school youth are similar to the composite sample. They like and attend mixed parties and dances, have opposite sex "best friends", and spend time with or date the opposite sex to the same degree as other youth. Some interesting differences occur within the Catholic school sample--22% of the 5th graders attend mixed parties at least two or three times a month, compared with 18% of 8th graders who party as often.

Discussion and Action Starters

Autonomy

1. Provide opportunities for parents of 5th and 6th graders in which they discuss and explore their child's developing need for autonomy.

2. List types of decisions young adolescents typically make for themselves, decisions which they make in conjunction with adults, and decisions which adults make for them. Explore ways to assist teachers and parents in dealing with the changing nature of young people's decision-making

- Less then 20% of young adolescents report major conflict with their parents.

- There is no major difference between boys and girls in the degree of conflict.

- The amount of conflict increases slowly with each advance in grade.

(see Composite Sample, Project Report)

Maturation and Sexuality

1. Assess catechetical programs dealing with human sexuality. Are they adequate? Responsive to child's needs? Involving of parents? Wholistic? How do they measure up against the criteria listed in Education in Human Sexuality for Christians, published by the United States Catholic Conference.

2. Explore the implications of this: youth are led to believe that sexual intercourse is O.K. as long as both agree, no one gets hurt, and you love each other. How many adolescents are, or believe they are, presently in love?

3. How prevalent in your area is the double standard which says boys can "sow their oats" and be sexually active, but girls can't? Hold a parent and teacher seminar on the socialization of boys and girls especially in respect to their emerging sexuality.

Identity. Catholic school youth are similar to the composite sample on how much time they spend thinking about themselves and are also similar in self-esteem. This latter scale measures the degree to which they feel they have a number of good qualities, like themselves, are glad to be who they are, are proud of themselves and feel worthwhile. In response to the items "On the whole, I like myself," 41 percent marked "very true," 28 percent "quite true," 17 percent "somewhat true," 8 percent "a little true," and 5 percent "not at all true."

The Catholic school youth ranked slightly lower than composite youth on both feminine and masculine sex role orientation. Feminine sex role orientation measures characteristics such as empathy, nurturance, emotional expressiveness, and interpersonal competence.

Masculine sex-role orientation measures characteristics such as individuality, assertiveness, competitiveness, and independence.

Intimacy. Seven of ten 5th graders in the Catholic school sample report no trouble in talking with kids of the opposite sex. This increases gradually to nine of ten by the 8th grade, a pattern similar to the composite sample.

Overall, Catholic youth appear slightly less able to establish intimacy than the composite group. This scale measures youths' estimates of how well they think they can talk about personal things, understand feelings and share them, and intuit the feelings of best friends.

Achievements. Catholic youth have aspirations to attend college or earn an advanced degree similar to the composite (59% of 5th; 76% of 8th). Five percent say they would like to quit school as soon as they can.

Only three percent of the 8th graders report that it doesn't bother them when they don't do well. Nearly 7% of 5th graders report this. Thirty-one percent of 8th graders value doing well in school as one of the top three or four things they want most in life; another 64% want this very much or quite a bit. Overall, on the scale of achievement motivation, Catholic school youth are similar to other youth.

Discussion and Action Starters

Identity

1. Gather parents and teachers to discuss sex role orientations and ways to promote the development of young people's identity.

2. Which qualities listed for male sex orientation are desirable in females as well? Which are listed for females that are desirable for males as well?

> Satisfaction with body
>
> At all grade levels, girls express less satisfaction with their bodies than boys, and girls' levels of satisfaction decreases with each advancing grade, while boys' comfort level remains stable.
>
> (See Composite Sample, Project Report)

Intimacy

1. Sponsor a workshop for teachers and parish staff which focuses on intimacy. Promote adults' skills in sharing personal things, understanding feelings, and intuiting the feelings of friends. Be sure the workshop leader is professionally qualified and skilled in the subject.

Achievement

1. Explore the factors behind grade school youth (5%) who want to quit school as soon as possible. How can this situation be responded to positively?

2. At what times do young people experience a sense of achievement? How important is it that they do? Are there changes that can be made in pedagogy so that achievement needs are adequately met?

Social Integration. Two out of 100 Catholic school youth say they have no close friends, while 35% have ten or more close friends. Patterns of response in this item did not vary much from 5th to 8th grade. When asked if they had difficulty making friends, 13% of Catholic school youth responded "almost always" or "often true", 54% responded "sometimes" or "once in a while", and 32% responded "never true." Over 40% say they are uncomfortable in a crowd at least "sometimes" (24% sometimes, 10% often, 9% almost always).

Ten percent of Catholic school youth are very lonely, 45% are lonely "sometimes" or "once in a while", and 45% are "never lonely". Patterns are fairly similar from 5th to 8th on this item.

Nearly twice as many 5th graders (22%) as 8th graders (12%) feel other kids make fun of them "very often." "To be popular at school" is one of the top three or four values for 13% of 8th graders and 20% of 5th (grade 6, 22%, grade 7, 20%), and another 32% of 8th and 25% of 5th graders value popularity at school "very much." Only four percent of 8th and 13% of 5th value this "very little" or "not at all"

Social Attitudes. What do Catholic school youth say about issues such as military spending, government aid for poor people, the elderly, racism, and sexism? On all these issues, except one, Catholic youth are similar to the composite sample. The exception...Catholic youth more strongly favor the government helping people who are poor and hungry (91% Catholic youth and 86% composite agree). Eleven percent of Catholic school youth want more of the national budget to go for bombs and other weapons. Seven percent don't like to be around old people, 11 percent don't trust people of other races.

The sexism scale has four items exploring youths' attitudes about male and female roles and stereotypes. Twenty-nine percent of Catholic school youth agree that the father should make all the important decisions, 66% think women should have the same rights as men, 66 percent blame the girl more than the boy when a pregnancy occurs, and 11 percent think men should have more freedoms than women.

Discussion and Action Starters

Social Integration

1. Who is looking after the 2% who say they don't have any friends, and the 10% who say they are very lonely? Is outreach to lonely young people a deliberate and regular responsibility assigned to somebody? to all staff?

2. Do faculty members meet periodically to discuss the social integration of students? Are there techniques and concepts they might be trained in to heighten skills along these lines?

Item: In the last year, how often have your thought about killing yourself?	Catholic youth sample			
	Grade 5	Grade 6	Grade 7	Grade 8
% Not at all	52	58	56	55
% Once or twice	25	26	27	31
% 3-5 times	8	8	6	6
% 6-10 times	5	3	4	5
% 11 times or more	9	5	6	4

Social Attitudes

1. In your opinion, do youth's responses on social attitude issues differ much from adults?

Young people with a high degree of social alienation have a low degree of parental nurturance and family closeness and a high degree of authoritarian control and coercive punishment. These family patterns may explain why some your fail to connect with others, lacking skills in social competence.

Worries. In seven out of twelve items Catholic school youth report significantly higher levels of worry than the composite sample. Those seven items are: school, parents dying, personal appearance, relationship with friends, getting a job, the nuclear threat, and their physical development.

Youth were given a list of twenty concerns and were asked to indicate, for each one, how much they worried. The top twelve worries of Catholic youth, and respective percentages responding "very much" or "quite a bit" are:

About how I'm doing in school	66%
That one of my parents might die	57%
About my looks	55%
About how well other kids like me	52%
About how my friends treat me	49%
About all the people who are hungry and poor in our country	43%
About all the violence that happens in our country	41%
That I might lose my best friend	40%
About all the drugs and drinking I see around me	38%
That I might not get a job	35%
That a nuclear bomb might be dropped on America	33%
About whether my body is developing (growing) in a normal way	33%

Other concerns noted with less frequency are:

That I might kill myself	15%
That someone might force me to do sexual things I don't want to do	23%
That one of my parents will hit me so hard that I will be badly hurt	15%
That I may die soon	29%
That I might get beat up at school	13%
About how much my mother or father drinks	20%
That my friends will get me in trouble	21%
That my parents might get a divorce	29%

Were there any significant trends across the four grades on any worries? Younger youth worry more than older about hungry and poor people, violence in the U.S., the drugs and drinking they see, and their physical development. Older youth worry more than younger about their appearance and relationship with friends.

Discussion and Action Starters

Worries

1. Taking the list of 20 worries and the percentages who worry very much or quite a bit, discuss with teachers and/or parents what, why, when, and to what advantage?

2. Why should adults be concerned about young people's worries? Which worries concern you the most? What might you do about them?

CHAPTER 3

VALUES AND RELIGION

What do Catholic youth value, and how important is religion in their lives? This chapter summarizes youth's responses to these questions. Especially noteworthy are the changes that appear when comparisons are made between 5th graders and 8th graders.

Moral Values. Five moral situations were presented to the youth respondents. To what degree did Catholic youth respond along the lines of traditional moral values? Eighty-four percent believe it is wrong to deliberately disturb the classroom, 91% believe it is wrong to shoplift and 83% believe it is wrong to lie to parents. On these three items, Catholic youth are similar to all youth. On two others, they differ. Fewer Catholic youth think it is wrong for 13 year olds to drink "a couple of cans of beer", and quite a few more believe abortion is wrong (74% vs. 78% on drinking and 66% vs. 41% on abortion).

Across the four grades the following differences occur. More 8th graders than 5th believe classroom disturbance (92% vs.79%), shoplifting (95% vs. 86%), and abortion (74% vs. 53%) are wrong or very wrong. The trend reverses in lying to parents (8th grade, 81%; 5th grade, 87%) and kids drinking (8th grade, 73%; 5th grade, 78%) with fewer 8th graders holding to the traditional moral values.

Values. What do youth want in life? To a list of 24 items, youth were asked to respond to each one whether they wanted it "not at all", "somewhat", "quite a bit", "very much", or as one of the three or four "at the top of the list". Compared with the composite sample, Catholic school youth place higher priority on good jobs, a world without war, making parents proud of them, a world without hunger or poverty, and fun and good times. They placed a lower priority on having God at the center of their life.

The twelve (of 24) most important values for Catholic school youth and the corresponding percentage of those responding "at the top of the list" are:

A happy family	48%
A good job when older	46%
A world without war	41%
Do something important in life	41%
Make my parents proud of me	40%
Do well in school	38%
God at center of my life	37%
World without hunger and poverty	34%
Friends I can count on	32%
Feel good about myself	31%
Fun and good times	28%
To be really good at sports	25%

Across the grade levels, changes occur on the twelve items given above. More 8th than 5th graders place priority on jobs and doing something significant in their life. On the other ten items, more 5th graders than 8th placed a higher priority on each item. The most dramatic decrease by 8th grade occurs on these values: a world without war (5th grade, 45%; 8th grade, 33%), making parents proud (44%--35%), doing well in school (40%--31%), God at the center of my life (44%--29%), and a world without hunger or poverty (36%--28%).

Discussion and Action Starters

Moral Values

1. What might be some explanations for the differences in moral values from 5th to 8th grade?

2. What role might the fact that 5th graders think more concretely than 8th graders, and 8th graders do more abstract thinking than 5th, play in explaining the differences? Are 8th graders less moral or are they more tolerant of "gray areas" in moral situations? What do you think?

Values

1. Are there any surprises as you look at youth's responses to their top three or four values? Share your reflections with colleagues or friends and explore the meaning of the data.

2. Why are so many young adolescents wanting a good job when they are older?

3. Why are there significant changes between 5th and 8th grades?

Value changes Between 5th and 9th graders*	
Value orientations which strongly increase between 5th and 9th grade:	Autonomy Future achievement
Value orientations which increase slightly between 5th and 9th grade:	Friendship Self-esteem Peer acceptance
Value orientations which remain stable between 5th and 9th grade:	Family Hedonism
Value orientations which decrease between 5th and 9th grade:	Institutional connection Concern for people and the world

*Based on composite sample

Religion. Eighty-six percent of Catholic youth believe God exists (61.4% "for sure"; 24.3% "quite sure"), 10% are not sure, 3% do not think there is a God, and 2% are sure there is not.

Eighty-seven percent believe Jesus is the Son of God, died on the cross, and rose again. Another 5% believe Jesus is the Son of God but doubt the resurrection. Nearly 5% think he was a great man, but not the Son of God, and 2.6% do not think he ever existed.

On belief in God, 8th graders are a bit more likely to doubt traditional church teaching than 5th graders. However, on belief in Jesus, the opposite is true--acceptance of traditional church teaching increases between 5th and 8th grade.

Fifth graders tend toward a literal interpretation of how God wrote the Bible, 60% believing that every word is "exactly what God wanted put into it" (8th grade--31%). Nearly two out of three eighth graders favor a less literal role for divine inspiration, (63% of 8th vs. 28% of 5th grade), believing that God guided rather than dictated to the Biblical authors. Four percent of Catholic youth think the Bible is just a lot of made up stories without much of God's involvement. Compared with the composite sample, Catholic youth are less literal in their interpretation.

Overall, half consider religion to be very important in their lives (18% say "the most important influence", 33% say "one of the most important influences"). About one in ten rank religion as having no or almost no influence in their lives.

Compared with the composite sample, Catholic youth tend more to a religious style which is horizontal rather than vertical, that is, relating religion to service, reaching out and helping people, rather than "me and God." They are less likely than the composite sample to perceive religion in terms of rules and punishment for violation of them.

Catholic school youth pray most days or daily, significantly more than the composite group. This is true at every grade level (5th, 82% vs. 71%., 6th, 77% vs. 70%; 7th, 75% vs. 68%, 8th, 78% vs. 68%).

Discussion and Action Starters

Religion

1. How much is the fact that 31% of 8th graders still accept a literal interpretation of divine inspiration of the Bible due to home influence (and thus a need for adult education on the Bible) or to inadequate religious education? Who has the responsibility to encourage Bible study in the school or parish?

2. What is the good news in the data about religion?

Religious Themes

People experience religion in different ways. Four of these are:

Liberating religion	Experiencing religion as freeing and enabling
Restricting religion	Experiencing religion as supplying limits, controls, guidelines and discipline
Vertical religion	Experiencing religion with emphasis on prayer, worship and keeping one's focus on God
Horizontal religion	Experiencing religion with emphasis on reaching out and caring for other people

Findings

Girls tend to be higher than boys on liberating religion.
Boys tend to be higher than girls on restricting religion.
Boys tend to be slightly higher than girls on horizontal religion.

Discussion: Which is your preferred experience? What are the advantages and disadvantages of each?

CHAPTER 4

BEHAVIORS

Behaviors can be prosocial or antisocial. This chapter reports youth's behaviors of both types.

Prosocial Behavior. Youth were asked several questions about things they do to help other people without getting paid. Is it a priority for them and do they spend much time and energy in helping activities? Catholic youth indicate less time in these activities compared with the composite sample. Thirty-two percent reported giving no time in the last month helping people such as the elderly or handicapped, without getting paid. Forty-two percent report 1 to 2 hours, 14 percent report 3 to 4 hours, eight percent report 5 to 10 hours, and four percent report 11 or more hours.

Antisocial Behavior. On the index of aggressive behavior, at all grade levels except 8th, Catholic youth show a significantly higher amount of hitting, fighting, and vandalism than the composite sample. The same is true on the index of norm-breaking behaviors which measured lying to parents, cheating on a test at school, and shoplifting.

When asked how frequently they hit or beat up another youth in the last 12 months, 46 percent of Catholic youth responded "never" (composite - 54%). Thirty-four percent of Catholic youth compared with 26 percent of composite youth participated in a gang fight during this same period. Twenty-nine percent admitted to acts of vandalism (compared with 26% of composite).

How often do Catholic youth lie to parents, cheat in school, or shoplift? Half have lied to parents more than just once or twice in the past year, 23 percent have cheated on a test more than once or twice and 25 percent have shoplifted at least once in the past year. Three percent admit to shoplifting in the "11 times or more" response column.

Boys are considerably higher than girls on aggressive behavior such as hitting or fighting, and the frequency increases with each advancing grade from 5th through 8th. Girls lie as much as boys, but steal and cheat less often than boys.

Discussion and Action Starters

Prosocial Behavior

1. Explore with other adults the best reasons you can give to a young person who asks why he or she should do something without getting paid. Why is this important?

> Young people who are strongly prosocial in their behavior are likely to have several other things going on in their life concurrently. First, they are well connected to church and take religion seriously. Second, a variety of parenting practices is happening in their lives. These practices involve parent-to-child affection, nurturance (parents pay keen attention to child's needs, take the time to listen and talk, etc.), democratic control (the parent seeks to establish rules and guidelines in concert with the child, attempting to take the child's point of view into consideration when setting the rules), and inductive discipline (after a child breaks a rule, the parent rationally explains to the child why the rule was important, why the behavior was wrong, and how rules' violations conflict with the child's concern for human welfare). Taken all together, this parenting style is a very child-centered approach through which a child feels affirmed and loved.
>
> (See Composite Sample, Project Report

Anti-Social Behavior

1. Provide opportunity for teachers and/or parents to explore new ways to deal with aggressive behaviors. Giving priority to this subject, developing and articulating standards, agreeing upon appropriate limits for and ways to confront unacceptable behaviors will almost certainly affect desired change.

2. Explore the idea that "silence is interpreted as approval." Is this true for adults? For adolescents?

> Both aggression and norm-breaking behaviors are more likely to occur when a young adolescent (a) associates with peers who are prone to this kind of deviance; (b) experiences conflict with parents; (c) is uninterested in school; (d) has high exposure to the media; and (e) perceives school climate as negative (i.e., peers at school abuse chemicals, break rules, do not take school seriously).
>
> (See Composite Sample, Project Report

Alcohol and Drugs. Catholic youth use alcohol and drugs more than the composite sample youth. Half of the 7th and 8th graders drank alcoholic beverages at least once the last year Fifteen percent have been drunk at least once in the last year--this includes fifth and sixth graders. About 10% used marijuana at least once and about 8% used hard drugs in the last year. Use of hard drugs is higher among grades 5, 6, and 7 than it is in grade 8.

In the last year, 29% of 8th graders attended parties where their peers were drinking beer or liquor (5th, 15%; 6th, 18%; 7th, 26%).

Dating and Sexuality. One-third of Catholic fifth graders claim to have been out on a date in the last year. This figure increases to half by grade eight. About 5% of the 7th and 8th graders report a frequency of 20 times or more in the last 12 months, about 21% report from 6 to 19 times, and about 30% report 1 to 5.

The incidence and frequency of kissing someone their own age of the opposite sex parallels the dating self-report very closely with slightly higher percentages for kissing than for dating.

As for having experienced sexual intercourse, 15 percent of 8th graders report they have had intercourse at least once. Four percent of 8th graders claim to have been pregnant or made a girl pregnant. The Catholic sample was higher than the composite on the pregnancy item.

Discussion and Action Starters

Alcohol and Drugs

1. What are young people being taught at home, school, and church about alcohol and drug use and abuse? What, if anything, is being told to them about the moral aspects of drug and alcohol abuse?

2. Hold a conference for people of all ages (especially adolescents, parents, faculty, church staff, older high school youth and college age adults) to explore the effects chemical abuse has on society.

3. Join the efforts toward prevention of chemical abuse. Write for the newsletter of the National Center for Youth, their Families & Society:

   5701 Normandale Road
   Suite 315
   Minneapolis, MN 55424

Dating and Sexuality

1. Provide an in-service opportunity for teachers and parish staff on catechesis in sexuality. Obtain a copy of NCEA's Momentum, May, 1982 for a model format you could use.

2. Encourage and facilitate parental involvement in the sexual formation of attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of adolescents. Information alone has little impact on behavior. Parental concern, awareness and communication about sexuality mean a lot to young people.

CHAPTER 5

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

Sources of help. Many, if not most, youth are likely to turn first to their parents if they have trouble in school (53%), have questions about sex (50%), are trying to decide what to do with their life (58%), or are wondering how to handle feelings (47%). If a friend were to use drugs or alcohol, about one third would turn first to parents, another third either to an adult friend, relative, teacher, or clergy, 15% would seek a friend their own age, and 12% nobody. After parents (35%) clergy would be sought out to deal with guilty feelings by 20% and friends their own age would be sought by 19%. Of the persons mentioned, friends their own age rank next to parents as sources of advice or help on most items. School is an exception. After parents (53%), teachers would be sought out by 17% and 15% would turn to a friend.

Desired Programs From Youth Organizations (clubs, school, church, or community group). Youth were asked whether or not they were interested in certain kinds of help if it were offered by their clubs, school, church or community. More than half of Catholic school youth said they were interested enough and would go out of their way to get involved in "learning how to make friends and be a friend" (59%), and finding out "what is special about me" (53%). The level of interest remains constant across the four grades. Almost half expressed similar interest in help "figuring out what it means to be Christian" (46%) and "learning about what is right and wrong" (45%). On these two items, the level of interest decreases somewhat between 5th and 8th grades.

Four out of ten also express great interest in opportunities which help them talk about matters of importance with other youth (42%) and learning how to converse better with adults (40%). Talking with adults is especially of interest to half of the 5th graders.

One-third of Catholic youth would go out of their way to attend programs about sexuality, and 29% would do so on the topic of drugs and alcohol. One-fourth are looking for programs that help them "do something good for other people."

Discussion and Action Starters

Sources of Help or Advice

1. How aware are young people of the resources available to them when they need advice or help? Do some adolescents feel they have no one to go to for help? If so, what might be done to remedy this?

2. Programs are available which develop helping skills in young people. Peer Counselor Training is one program that does this.

Interest in Program

1. Study the chart below. Think about those who say they aren't interested, as well as those who say they are. How well do you think these figures fit your young people?

2. If you were to add one new program opportunity for your youth, what would it be?

How much interest Catholic youth have in programs which help them:	% Desiring Program		
	None	Some	Much
Find out how to do something good for other people.	7	66	26
Learn how to make friends and be a friend	7	34	59
Find out what is "special about me"	8	38	54
Understand sex better	22	44	34
Learn about what is right and wrong	12	43	45
Figure out what it means to be a Christian	12	42	46
Figure out what it means to be Jewish	68	22	10
Learn how to deal with drugs and alcohol	34	37	29
Talk with other kids about things that are really important	10	48	42
Learn how to talk better with adults	11	48	41

Desired Communication with Parents. What do youth want to talk more about with their parents? Approximately half of the youth indicated how they and their parents get along (53%), how they're doing in school (50.5%), what their parents expect of them (49%), their friends (48%), their ideas of what is right and wrong (48%). About four in ten want more talk over questions about sex, problems parents are having, and drugs or alcohol. One in three want more discussion about dress and hairstyles.

Sex drugs and alcohol are slightly less a conversation priority for the 5th graders than for 6th, 7th, and 8th. Catholic school youth express a bit more of a desire than the composite sample to increase communication with parents.

Discussion and Action Starters

More Communication with Parent

1. Select one topic about which youth want more communication with parents. Brainstorm current barriers, reasons why it is not happening now, and strategies to bring it about.

PART II

PARENTS

Chapter 6

Social Context

Parents participating in the Catholic school sample were mostly white (91% mothers and 93% fathers). The rest described themselves as Black, Hispanic, Asian, or American Indian. Eighty-four percent of mothers and 93% of fathers were in their first marriage at the time of the survey. Another 4% mothers and 5% fathers had been divorced and were now remarried. Eleven percent of mothers were presently single (1% never married, 9% divorced and 1% widowed).

Catholic families were larger than the composite. Four percent of mothers and four percent of fathers had eight or more children (composite sample, 1%). The Catholic sample had more families with four to seven children than did the composite, and fewer with two or three children.

Nine out of ten parents were homeowners. Very few lived in condominiums or mobile homes. Six percent of mothers and three percent of fathers lived in small apartments. Seventy-one percent of the children in the survey had their own bedroom (compared with 80% of the composite sample).

Twenty-two percent of mothers and 10% of fathers worked full-time in the home as housewife or househusband. One third of mothers and 88% of fathers were employed fulltime for pay, 24% of mothers and 2% of fathers worked part-time. One percent of fathers were permanently disabled, 4% were unemployed, and 1% were retired. The Catholic sample was not significantly different from the composite in these items.

A higher than average number of mothers (71% vs 65% composite) and fathers (73% vs. 53% composite) in the Catholic sample attend church at least weekly. About 4% attend a church different from their child's.

Discussion and Action Starters

Social Context

1. How do Catholic families seem to differ from the composite sample?

2. Are there some mothers and fathers in new roles or life situations? What kinds of support might they appreciate having available to them?

3. Is it important for young people - the majority of whom enjoy their own bedrooms - to realize that most of the world's population of children share a bedroom with others?

	Catholic school sample	
	Mothers	Fathers
To be a good parent is one of the hardest things I do.		
% Agree or strongly agree	87	75
I am not as good a parent as I should be.		
% Agree or strongly agree	39	46
How much do you worry about the job you are doing raising your child?		
% Worry very much or quite a bit	74	67

Family Crises. Parents were asked to indicate whether or not they had experienced a number of life crises since their child's birth. Most often noted were loss of a job (23%), a serious accident or sickness (21%), severe financial hardship in the family (16%), divorce (13%) or separation (11%). Ten percent had their homes burglarized, 8% had alcoholism in the family, 5% were dealing with a disability or hardship, 4% experienced a natural disaster and 4% had to deal with drug addiction in the family. Three percent had a son or daughter die, 2% had a spouse die, and 2% had a child born with a handicap. Two percent had a family member who was sexually assaulted or physically attacked.

Family Life. Mothers and fathers report a level of marital harmony slightly greater than the composite. Marital harmony was measured by self-reports on happiness in the marriage relationship and degree of arguing or getting mad at each other.

Seventy-five percent of mothers claim to show physical affection to their young adolescent daily, and 56% give verbal signs of affection every day. Fathers show affection less often (54% reporting daily physical and 37% reporting daily verbal affection).

Mothers spend more time than fathers on an average day with their adolescent just talking, playing or being together (83% vs 61% spending 30 minutes or more).

Parents of youth in the Catholic sample are a bit less positive about being a parent than parents in the composite sample. Eighty-six percent felt they were doing a good job as parents, 10% said they sometimes wished they didn't have children, and 86% reported a lot of satisfaction in being a parent.

More Catholic parents than the composite get so angry at their children that they fear they might hurt them (61% vs. 67% composite report "never"). They report about the same frequency of hitting or slapping their child as the composite (22% of mothers and 30% of fathers report "never"). About 15% see themselves as a lot more strict than other parents.

Two percent of mothers and 1% of fathers say their spouse has beat them up. Another 8% (mothers) and 13% (fathers) say their spouse has hit, kicked, or slapped them.

Discussion and Action Starters

Family Crises

1. After reviewing the data, explore these questions: What support groups or systems are available to parents experiencing crises? Are they used? Are they adequate?

2. What might the school or parish do to provide needed support for families at times of crises? Does your school and parish provide ministry to stressed families?

Young adolescents' report of pressures to achieve.

Catholic youth were asked to respond to this item in the survey: "My parents expect too much of me." Those who report that their parents expect too much tend also to report these circumstances: that their parents are authoritarian, use coercive discipline, punish by withdrawal of love, and abuse their child. Youth in this group also report, for their own part, a variety of antisocial behaviors such as lying to parents, conflict with parents, strong peer influence, peer pressure to deviant behavior, worry about killing themselves, and influence by the mass media. As if that were not enough, we find the following negative associations for the children pushed too hard (that is, the unlikelihood of their being present): parental nurturance, democratic controls, parental trust, family closeness, high self-esteem in the young person, centrality of religion, parental expression of affection, a positive school climate, parental harmony, achievement motivation, and time spent with mother.

One could scarcely invent a list more powerful as illustration of potential dangers that accompany unreasonably high expectations for a child's achievement. The data do not resolve the question of whether the parental expectations were ever at any time reasonable. What we see in the data is an outline of a pitched battle, parents and young person using the weapons at their disposal to cause as much hurt and frustration to the other as possible--and all of its self-defeating and without hope unless somehow the cycle of conflict is broken.

(See Composite Sample, Project Report

Family Life

1. Provide an opportunity for fathers especially to discuss their thoughts and beliefs, relative to manifesting affection toward young adolescent children.

2. Why do boys receive less physical and verbal affection than girls, from both mothers and fathers? What do you think?

26% of youth in Catholic sample have their own television set.

Parenting Styles

Parenting styles have important relationships to young adolescents' values and behaviors. The relationships found in this study are consistent with those found in other projects. And they are among the strongest relationships found in the entire study. In capsule form, these findings are:

- Four parenting behaviors--demonstrative affection, nurturance, democratic control, and inductive discussion--are strongly tied to social-emotional health in the young adolescent. They are positively related to self-esteem, social competence, prosocial behavior, achievement motivation, internalization of moral values, and concern for people and the world. They are negatively related to social alienation, aggression, norm-breaking behavior, and chemical use.

- Four parenting behaviors--authoritarian control, permissive control, coercive discipline, and love withdrawal--have the opposite relationship to what young adolescents value and do. Each of these, for example, is positively associated with aggression, social alienation, and chemical use, and negatively associated to self-esteem, prosocial behavior, and social competence.

There are several possible explanations for these findings. One is this: affection, nurturance, induction, and democratic control contribute to a family mileau in which young adolescents feel both support and freedom within well explained, even negotiable, limits. This combination produces good feelings about the self, good feelings about one's parents, and the internalization of rules and norms parents consider important. On the other hand, authoritarian control, coercive discipline (which are highly correlated with each other), love withdrawal and permissive control do not provide young adolescents with either a sense of caring/support or responsible limits (authoritarian control is extreme on the punitive side, permissive control is extreme on the lenient side). These techniques do not build a sense of self-confidence or a sense of self-importance. In addition, authoritarian control and coercive discipline may encourage rebellion against parental norms.

Parents in the Catholic sample reflected a greater degree of concern and worry about parenting than the composite group of parents.

Discussion and Action Starters

Parenting Styles

Authoritarian control:	Discipline style which is non-democratic, non-negotiable, and inflexible. The parents assert rules, tolerate little deviance from these rules and are firm and swift with punishment.
Democratic control:	Discipline style is which parents seek to establish rules and behavioral guidelines in concert with the child. The parent seeks the child's advice and input, and then firmly explains in a rational way what the agreed upon rules are and what the consequences for rule violations are.
Permissive control:	Discipline style which is quite casual. The parent does not take the time to set rules, monitor behavior, or punish.
Coercive discipline:	A way of dealing with rule violations in which the parent uses force, either physically or verbally, to punish the child and/or demand compliance with rules.
Inductive discipline:	A rational, verbal method of discipline in which the parent takes the time to discuss the violation with the child, pointing our why rules are important and why rules violation is undesirable. If the undesirable behavior has negative consequences for another person, the parent attempts to help the child become sensitive to the hurt or pain he or she has inflicted on someone else.
Love withdrawal:	Parental behavior like pouting, expressing disappointment, avoiding the child or giving the child the "silent treatment" as a result of the child's rule violation.

1. Which of these styles describes your approach to discipline, whether you are a parent, teacher, youth worker, or otherwise responsible for young people?
2. Identify the positive and/or negative outcomes for each style.
3. Provide an event for parents and teachers which explores discipline styles.

Discussion and Action Starters (continued)

Nurturance:	This refers to a cluster of parental behaviors which shows concern or compassion for the child. Behaviors included here are taking a serious interest in the child's problems, being available when a child wants to talk, taking an interest in the child's activities, and paying attention to the child's psychological needs.
Demonstrative affection:	This refers to a combination of physical (hugging, kissing) and verbal ("I love you") expressions of affection.

Social and Political Attitudes. Parents in the Catholic sample see themselves as political and social moderates, leaning slightly toward the liberal side. Half of mothers and one-third of fathers call themselves Democrats, one-fourth of mothers and one-third of fathers call themselves Republicans, and the remainder are either Independent or "other."

The majority of mothers (69%) and half of fathers (51%) agree that the government should do more to help the poor and hungry (composite mothers, 56%, fathers, 46%). Few fathers (13%) and fewer mothers (7%) think that our government should spend more money for nuclear weapons. Five percent of mothers and 4% of fathers report that they do not trust people of other races. Thirty-four percent of parents would not look disfavorably on racially mixed marriages.

On the measure of sexist attitudes, mothers in the Catholic sample displayed a slightly greater degree of egalitarianism than those in the composite sample. For example, 73% of Catholic mothers believe that women should have all the same rights as men (63% composite).

Discussion and Action Starters

Social and Political Attitudes

1. How much do youth's attitudes match parents on questions such as government programs to help the poor and hungry, nuclear and military spending, and interracial dating and marriage?

Comparision of Political Attitudes

Youth (86%) are more supportive than parents (50%) of more government help for the poor and hungry. Younger youth and girls are stronger in their support of this type of help than older youth.

Youth's endorsement of more spending for nuclear weapons is practically identical with parents.

Boys (19%), like their fathers (14%), are more likely than mothers and girls to agree to more support for nuclear weapons. Only six percent of mothers and five percent of daughters agree to it.

But these data come from all parents included in the study and all children included in it. The further question arises whether there is any relationship to be found between attitudes expressed by young adolescents and their own parents, rather than all parents in general. Statistical analysis of only those adolescents whose parents completed the survey was done. Findings may be summarized as follows:

- Parents tend to agree with each other on these questions.
- A modest but significant relationship does exist between the attitudes of youth and the attitudes of their own parents toward nuclear weapons and government relief of poverty.

Racial prejudice: parent attitudes

- Five percent of the parents agree with the statement, "I don't trust people of other races."
- Parents are more divided on the propriety of interracial dating, with 45 percent of mothers and 50 percent of fathers accepting interracial dating. About 20 percent of parents are not sure and about 30 percent disapprove.
- Parents scoring high on racial prejudice are more likely to be politically conservative and to have less education than others.
- Children of prejudiced parents are likely to hold similar attitudes.

(See Composite Sample, Project Report)

CHAPTER 7

PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

Self-Esteem. The degree of self-esteem held by parents in the Catholic sample was high. For example, few (5%) regularly think of themselves as "no good" or feel they have little to be proud of (4%). Most feel they have a lot of good qualities.

High self-esteem by both parents is strongly associated with strong nurturance of the child, a high positive family index, democratic control by parents, and a low level of parent-child misunderstanding.

High self-esteem by both parents is moderately associated with children who report family closeness, high family quality, and time spent daily with parents. High parent self-esteem is negatively associated with youth who view parents as lenient.

Behavior. Parents in the Catholic sample report much higher use of alcohol and cigarettes than the composite sample. Eight percent of mothers and 20% of fathers use alcohol daily, compared with 4% and 10% of composite sample. Daily use of tobacco is reported by 31% of mothers and 39% of fathers, compared with 16% and 22% of composite group.

How often do parents from the Catholic sample go out of their way to help others? Fifty-seven percent report often or very often. Fifteen percent volunteer five hours a month or more to help the poor, sick, elderly, or handicapped.

Discussion and Action Starters

Self-Esteem

1. Respond to this set of items. Discuss your responses with friends.

Key: A = Very true
B = Quite true
C = Somewhat
D = A little
E = Not at all true

How much do you agree or disagree with these statements?

		A	B	C	D	E
1.	I feel I do not have much to be proud of.					
2.	I feel I have a number of good qualities.					
3.	On the whole, I like myself.					
4.	I get a lot of satisfaction out of being a parent					
5.	All in all, I am glad I am me.					
6.	I think I'm doing a pretty good job as a parent.					

Behaviors

1. Discuss with other adults the relationship to youth of adult use and abuse of alcohol.

Masculine - Feminine Roles. Most parent in this study reject traditional views of parent roles, favoring shared responsibility and equal access to careers. Seventy-four percent of fathers and seventy-four percent of mothers believe that women, even if they have families, should be given opportunities equal to men to work and have careers outside the home. Sixty-six percent of fathers and sixty-six percent of mothers feel that mothers and fathers should play an equal role in caring for children, even if it means taking some time away from work.

Discussion and Action Starters

Masculine-Feminine Roles

Your response to these items?	SA - Strongly agree A - Agree NS - Not sure D - Disagree SD - Strongly disagree

1. Women can handle pressure just as well as men can when making a decision.
2. I think boys should grow up being just as gentle and caring as girls.
3. Even if they have families, women should be given opportunities equal to men to work and have careers outside the home.
4. I think boys and girls should be raised very differently from each other.
5. Mothers and fathers should play an equal role in caring for children, even if it means taking some time away from their jobs.
6. I think women should have all the same rights as men.
7. I think the father should make all the important decisions in a family.

Parents' Worries. Parents in the Catholic sample worry about their children a lot more than parents in the composite sample. From a list of fourteen worries, Catholic respondents worried more than the composite group in thirteen of them. Most frequently indicated as worrisome was the job they were doing in raising this child (75% of mothers and 68% of fathers responded very much or quite a bit). Their child's happiness and their child's future were mentioned almost as often (from 71% to 73%). Next most worrisome was how the child was doing in school (59%), drugs and alcohol (51%), how the parent disciplines the child (49%) and how they feel about themselves and their child (51%).

Many parents (from 40% to half) worry a lot about their child's friends, eating habits and health, attitude toward authority, views of right and wrong, and views about sex. They also worry about the amount of time they spend with their child.

Discussion and Action Starters

Worries

1. Why do parents worry so much? Is all of it necessary? Beneficial?
2. Provide opportunities for parents to talk about their concerns and worries, and discuss ways to deal with worries positively.

V - Very much
Q - Quite a bit
S - Some
L - A little
N - Not at all

How much do you worry about . . .	V	Q	S	L	N
The job you are doing as a parent?					
Your child's eating habits?					
Your child's attitude toward authority?					
Your child's view of what is right and wrong?					
How you and your child feel about each other?					
How your child is doing in school?					
How you discipline your child?					
Your child being around drugs and alcohol?					
Your child's views of sex?					
The amount of time you spend with your child?					
Your child's physical health?					
Your child's happiness?					
Your child's future?					

CHAPTER 8

VALUES

Moral Values. Traditional values are held by the vast majority of respondents in the Catholic sample. Ninety-three percent disapprove of young adolescents drinking alcohol. The situation they respond to was of 13 year old boys drinking a couple of cans of beer. The same percentage disapprove of premature adolescent sexual intercourse. The situation responded to was of two fifteen year olds who had known each other for two years, had been "steadies" for several months, and said they loved each other. Ninety-five percent of fathers and (95%) of mothers said it was wrong. A substantial majority of fathers (80%)and mothers (82%) disagree with the statement: "I think that young people should be able to experiment with sexual intercourse before marriage."

On the question of abortion, 76% of mothers and 74% of fathers believe it to be wrong. The situation was of a pregnant 15 year old girl who did not want to have the baby (composite data: 54% mothers, 51% fathers).

Another situation posed to respondents was of a ninth grade girl who had her parents permission to have her friends over when the parents were gone. Fifty-eight percent of mothers and 52% of fathers thought it wrong for the girl's parents to allow their daughter to have her friends over when they are not at home. Fourteen percent mothers and 23% fathers thought it was okay.

Values. Parents were asked to select the top three or four things out of a list of 16 they want most in life. Most often selected were these items (with their corresponding percentages).

- to have a happy family life (81% mothers, 67% fathers)
- to be a good parent (77% mothers, 53% fathers)
- to have God at the center of my life (43% mothers, 32% fathers)
- to have wisdom (37% mothers, 28% fathers)
- to feel good about myself (29% mothers, 25% fathers)
- to do something important with my life (18% mothers, 20% fathers)
- to have a world without hunger or poverty (20% mothers, 15% fathers)
- to live responsibly toward others (19% mothers, 13% fathers)
- to be successful (11% mothers, 20% fathers)
- to have friends I can count on (14% mothers, 8% fathers)
- to do things which help people (13% mothers, 20% fathers)
- few (from 2% to 5%) indicated that fun and good times, lots of money, doing whatever they want, whenever they want, and having influence and authority over others were among their top three or four values in life.

Discussion and Action Starters

Moral Values

1. Of the values reported in this section, which are the easiest and which are the most difficult for parents to discuss with their children? Why?

2. What are some effective ways for parents to deal with differing value systems other parents hold? What skills do children need to live in a pluralistic society which contains a variety of value systems?

In general, fathers and mothers have similar values and moral beliefs, even to the order of priority in which they rank the variety of values submitted to them.

On values, children and parents show some similarities and some differences. Some of the differences are easily understandable; at least some of them are no doubt a function of age.

When it comes to the question of specific actions that are related to morality and that may have been discussed at home, the responses of children and their parents come closer to agreement, though here also the differences in value are visible in the differing degrees of wrongness attributed to the specific actions posed. From much of the data reported in this chapter it appears that parental standards are higher than those of their children. But there are exceptions to this generalization. The idealism of youth is evident in their desire to do something important with their lives and to inhabit a more perfect world where hunger and poverty no longer exist. Youth indicate a stronger value preference for the elimination of hunger and poverty in this world than do their parents. Another exception from the survey, reported elsewhere under attitudes, bears mention here. Item 140 of the youth survey appears in identical form on the parent survey and relates to the wrongness or rightness of racial residential segregation.

The statement reads:

> The Olsons are a white family who live in a neighborhood of mostly all white people. A black family is considering buying a house nearby. The Olsons are trying to stop the black family from moving in. How right or wrong is it for the Olsons to do this?

	Mothers	Fathers	Sons	Daughters
Percentages indicating "Very wrong"	49%	41%	61%	70%

These exceptions suggest that the young are still in touch with what it is like to be among the powerless of the world and therefore to to champion the causes of other powerless groups. This may be an area in which parents can learn from their children.

(See Composite Sample, Project Report)

Discussion and Action Starters (continued)

Values

1. Are you surprised by any of the values listed or the order of priority?
2. What do you find encouraging about this data? Discouraging?
3. Note the sex differences, i.e., the differences between men and women. What do you think about them?

Religion. For 32% of mothers and 21% of fathers, religion is believed to be the most important influence in their lives. Nearly half of mothers and one-third of fathers pray daily.

The majority of parents experience their religion as a spur to action (challenging religion), as a source of support, comfort and solace (comforting religion), and as an experience which is freeing and enabling (liberating religion). About half experience religion as controlling with guidelines, discipline and limits (restricting religion). Compared with the composite sample, fewer respondents in the Catholic sample experience religion as liberating, and fewer experience it as restricting. More experience their religion as encouraging them to adopt compassionate, caring attitudes and actions (horizontal religion). Overall, respondents in the Catholic sample have a high degree of religious commitment. (The mean for this scale is +3.4 for mothers and +3.2 for fathers on a scale with +3 as high and -3 as low.)

Some interesting relationships exist between religion, values, and behavior. The religious themes of comforting, challenging, and liberating are negatively related to behaviors like alcohol use and violence toward spouse and positively related to a concern for people and doing community volunteer work.

Restricting religion has more problematic relationships. It is linked with racial prejudice and the use of authoritarian control in the home.

Horizontal religion is the only religious measure that is linked negatively to racial prejudice. That is, the higher a parent is on horizontal religion, the less likely he or she is to be prejudiced.

Sexism is positively linked to comforting, liberating, and restricting religious orientations. Horizontal religion, as in the case of racial prejudice, is the only religious dimension that is negatively related to sexism.

There are two major differences between parents and young adolescents with respect to the relationship of religion to values and behaviors. Young adolescents tend to adopt a slightly more liberating religious orientation than parents, and they also tend to be much more likely than parents to affirm the horizontal dimension in religion.

Discussion and Action Starters

Religion

Liberating Religion	- The degree to which religion is experienced as freeing and enabling.
Challenging Religion	- The degree to which religion is experienced as a spur to action.
Comforting Religion	- The degree to which religion is valued for support, comfort, and solace.
Restricting Religion	- The degree to which religion is experienced as supplying limits, controls, guidelines and discipline.
Horizontal Religion	- The degree to which religion presses a person to adopt compassionate, caring attitudes and actions.

1. Discuss the five types of religious experience. Which best characterize you? Do you think people can be more than one type at the same time? Or move from one to another?

Chapter 9

Life-Shaping Forces

Evaluation of Life-Shaping Forces. A list of eleven items was presented to parents. Asked to indicate which items were usually a positive or very positive influence in their lives, 96% placed their family life at the top of the list. Next came their child's teachers (92%), then church (87%), their child's friends (85%), organized sports (75%) and their neighborhood (70%).

Television was seen as a positive influence by six out of ten parents. Half indicate youth organizations such as 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts as positive influences on their children.

Movies and videogames are considered as a positive influence by four out of ten. One in six sees hardrock music as positive.

Influence of the Church. Nearly all respondents value the church as a positive influence in their child's beliefs about what is right and wrong (95.5%) and their child's religious faith (93.5%). Eighty-eight percent appreciate church influence on their child's view of authority, 83% appreciate church influence in their child's ability to make friends and be a friend. Large numbers also value church influence on their child's concern for the world's poor and hungry (76%), their child's knowledge about drugs and alcohol (63.5%) and their child's values about sex (65%).

Discussion and Action Starters

Life-Shaping Forces

1. In what order would you place these influences, ranking them from "most" to "least positive" as life-shaping forces in your life and/or your child's life.

Eleven Influences

- Video Games
- Television
- Movies
- Church or synagogue
- My child's teachers
- My neighborhood
- Hard rock music
- Organized sports
- Youth organizations such as 4-H, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts
- Our family life

2. With your friends or with any group of adults, discuss the specific benefits that young people derive from each of these influences.

3. Teachers and parish staff may find these data encouraging. Do they know the parent's positive regard and appreciation of church programs and personal ministry? If not, find a way to spread the good news.

Desired Communication with Youth. Which topics are the ones parents want to talk a lot more about with their children? Their child's worries and concerns (95%) and hopes and dreams (94%) top the list. Also important to parents is how to express their love for the child (89%). Sexuality, right and wrong, school, drugs, God and other religious topics, and friends are important for 68% to 85% of mothers and fathers. Sixty-three percent want more conversation on world events, and 38% want to talk about clothes and/or hair styles.

Discussion and Action Starters

Communication with Youth

Do you wish you could talk more with your child?

Some parents would like a chance to talk more to their children about important topics. Below is a list of topics. For each one, tell if it is something you would like to talk with your child more about. Choose your answers from:

Definitely - I definitely would like to talk more about this.
Probably - I would like to talk more about this.
Not sure
Probably not - I don't want to talk more about this.
Definitely not - I definitely don't want to talk more about this.

1. Drugs and alcohol
2. My child's questions about sex
3. My child's friends
4. My child's views of right and wrong
5. School
6. How my child dresses or wears his or her hair
7. God and other religious topics
8. World events
9. My child's hopes and dreams
10. My child's worries and concerns
11. My love for my child

1. Of these topics, which do you want more communication about?

2. What are the barriers to communication you experience now? How might these barriers be overcome?

CHAPTER 10

RESOURCES AND PROGRAMMING

Current Sources of Advice and Help. Seven situations were presented to parent respondents. These situations had to do with difficulties involving drugs, depression, questions about sex, how to discipline effectively, troublesome behaviors, hanging around with the wrong crowd, and being loving to their child.

In all of these situations, fathers most often would turn to nobody for advice or help (28%). Twenty-three percent would turn to a priest or church staff person. About 14% would look to a medical doctor, another 14% would look to a teacher, school counselor or other school official. Eleven percent would turn to a community or social service agency, 6% to a relative, and 4% to a friend or neighbor.

Nineteen percent of the others would turn to a priest or church staff person first, 18% to nobody, 17% to a doctor, 15% to school personnel, 15% to a community agency, 10% to a relative and 5% to a friend or neighbor.

Help Wanted From Churches, Schools, or Community Agencies. If help were available on a variety of topics, many parents would be very interested in taking advantage of it. Although fathers consistently express less interest than mothers, both parents show interest in help to develop their child's moral concepts and religious faith, 35% and 29% being "very interested" respectively. About the same number would like help in parent child communication and with the subject of drugs. About one in four is interested in programs dealing with effective discipline, one in five in parent group dynamics, and one in seven in sex education.

Discussion and Action Starters

Sources of Advice and Help

1. What qualities do parents look for in others before they ask for advice or help from them?

2. How do fathers and mothers seem to differ as seekers of advice or help?

Help Wanted

1. Fathers show less interest in help than mothers. Why is this so? Could it be different? Should it be different?

2. How might these data be used by program planners in program design, promotion, expectations, and evaluation?

Help Received. When asked to indicate which resources had been most helpful to them as parents so far in their experience, most frequently mentioned by both mothers and fathers was the priest or other church staff person (35% of mothers, 36% of fathers).

For mothers, relatives were even more helpful (42%) and so were books and magazines (36%). Friends or neighbors were also very helpful to mothers. Fathers rated church programs next in importance to the priest/staff person for them. Though relatives were next on their list, fathers depend on them a lot less than mothers for help (24% fathers, 42% mothers). Doctors ranked fairly high for fathers (24%) as with mothers (29%).

Fathers look to friends or neighbors a lot less than mothers do (16% fathers, 34% mothers). Psychologists, counselors, and local school programs are valued by about one in five parents as very or quite helpful. Twelve percent of mothers and 5% of fathers feel community or social service agencies are also very or quite helpful.

Compared with the composite sample, Catholic parents are less likely to view church personnel and programs as helpful to them in their parenting.

Discussion and Action Starters

Help Received

1. How do the responses in this section compare with your experience? Which resources have been most helpful to you?

2. Note the differences between mothers and fathers. What do you think they mean?

PART III

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

It should be remembered that the Catholic school youth sample underrepresents the rural dimension and overrepresents Great Lakes region residence. Accordingly, the conclusions presented here may have been somewhat different had more rural youth participated or had the geographic distribution been more representative. The distinctive characteristics of Catholic elementary school youth listed below should be understood in this context.

1. There are notable differences in schooling. Youth in Catholic schools do more homework than youth in the composite sample (which is overwhelmingly a public school sample). In terms of perceived school environment, Catholic school youth report less alcohol and marijuana use by peers than does the composite sample. On an index of interest in school, Catholic school youth score lower than the composite sample. There seems to be a contradiction here. On the one hand, Catholic school youth report a more positive school environment, and on the other, they report less interest in school.

   Catholic youth experience more anxiety about school than other youth. Perhaps this anxiety is a natural side-effect of attending schools which may be more academically rigorous than public schools. However, this anxiety may also interfere with school performance or maintaining interest in school. This may be an area that needs further exploration.

2. Catholic school youth attend church services more often than youth in the national sample. This may reflect, in part, requirements that Catholic schools have for attending Mass. The image Catholic youth have of the Church is less positive than for other youth. While 5th grader Catholic youth do not differ from the composite 5th graders on degree of interest in the Church, 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Catholic youth report less interest than other youth. This could be due to the fact that many Catholic school youth do not have parish youth programs tailored to their specific needs and interests. Note also that Catholic school youth report less family discussions about religious topics. This could mean that commitment to Church is less reinforced and less modeled at home for Catholic youth than other youth.

3. Catholic school youth appear to have developed more concern about issues like poverty and war than other youth. In the area of values, Catholic youth place higher emphasis on world peace and the alleviation of hunger, and are also more concerned about nuclear annihilation. These differences may reflect the historical commitment of the Catholic Church to issues of social justice.

4. As expected, Catholic school youth compared to other youth, are more likely to see abortion as morally wrong. However, on the index of traditional moral belief, they are slightly less affirming of traditional moral positions.

5. The religious faith of Catholic school youth differs in two major ways from composite youth. These Catholic youth are less inclined to view religion as restricting and more inclined to affirm the horizontal dimension (that is, translating faith into compassion for other people).

6. In comparison to the composite sample, Catholic school youth worry more about "how I'm doing in school." This achievement anxiety may be partly responsible for the finding (discussed in point 1 above) that Catholic school youth tend to be less interested in school.

7. Catholic school youth place higher value on "getting a good job when I am older" than other youth and worry more that "I might not get a good job" than other youth.

8. In the area of family dynamics, Catholic youth report slightly less parental harmony and family closeness and slightly more coercive punishment.

9. Catholic youth, compared to other youth, report less prosocial behavior (actions which benefit other people) and more aggressive and norm-breaking behavior (lying, cheating, etc.). The norm-breaking finding is consistent with the finding that Catholic school youth are less likely to affirm traditional moral standards regarding behaviors such as lying. These behavioral differences hold for 5th, 6th, and 7th grade NCEA youth. Eighth grade Catholic youth do not differ on prosocial, aggressive, or norm-breaking behavior from other 8th grade youth.

10. Overall, Catholic school youth are more likely than other youth to use alcohol, smoke cigarettes, and attend parties where alcohol is being used. However, Catholic eighth grade youth are similar to other eighth graders, while younger Catholic youth tend to be more involved with drugs and alcohol than their cohorts in the composite sample. Note that Catholic fifth grade youth report greater use than other 5th graders on three behaviors: alcohol use, cigarette use and marijuana use.

11. Catholic youth, compared to other youth, tend to be more active and/or more interested in the area of sexuality. Catholic youth report higher frequencies for thinking about sex and date more often. Catholic youth are less inclined to agree with the statement "I don't think I will have sexual intercourse until I get married." Catholic youth are also more interested in programs which could help them "understand sex better."

12. Catholic youth and other youth do not significantly differ in reported frequency of sexual intercourse. For both the Catholic and national samples, the 7th and 8th grade data is believable. Fifth and sixth graders may exaggerate and/or be more confused about what sexual intercourse is. Nonetheless, for both the Catholic sample and the composite sample, there appear to be a significant number of young adolescents who have experienced sexual intercourse.

13. Catholic youth are slightly more interested in having conversations with parents on most topics listed when compared with other youth. This interest tends to be stronger in 5th and 6th grade, except for questions about sex, drugs and alcohol, which peak at 7th grade for Catholic youth.

14. In terms of interest in the content of school and church programs, Catholic youth, compared to other youth, are more interested in "understanding sex better" and less interested in "understanding right and wrong," "figuring out what it means to be a Christian," and "finding out how to do something good for other people." Both Catholic and other youth are most interested in learning how to "make friends and be a friend" and "finding out what is special about me."

15. There is a readiness by many Catholic school youth to learn more about sexuality, friendship, and the meaning of Christian faith. Fifth grade Catholic youth would be particularly receptive to new programs in these three areas and in the area of morality.

16. One of the most dramatic findings in this study is the degree of worry and concern expressed by Catholic school parents. This may be due to the fact that the majority of Catholic families involved in this study live in large communities. Cities, as opposed to rural communities, may be more stressful environments in which to raise children. For whatever reason, it may be useful for parishes or schools to provide more opportunities for parents to discuss and explore parenting concerns. However, the data show that only a minority of parents currently have interest in this kind of assistance.